

willingness to work outside the box. Our programs have greatly improved over the years to offer training for careers our students are actually interested in.

Mr. Speaker, my State of Alabama is blessed with a strong network of community colleges offering a wide array of career training. Alabama Community College System has more than 79,000 students enrolled in CTE programs, and over 70 public high schools in Alabama are now offering CTE courses. They are working hand in glove with industry to make sure that the training matches the jobs that will be waiting for students when they complete their courses.

I visited one such program recently in Tallassee, a small town in central Alabama. Tallassee High School administrators have worked tirelessly to build a program that serves the growing needs of local students. The city and county are working together to improve facilities and make sure students have access to transportation.

Up until now, students in Tallassee have had to take a bus 30 minutes away to Wetumpka, or even an hour away to Montgomery to Trenholm State, to access these career tech courses. Now, thanks to the hard work of Tallassee's leaders and educators, students are beginning to access these programs right in their own hometown.

I visited another thriving career-type program a few months ago in Geneva, a small town in Alabama's Wiregrass region. Geneva High School has partnered with the Alabama National Guard, whose local armory serves as a training site for high-demand skills, such as automotive technology, welding, aviation maintenance, and health science. Students from city and county schools can get ahead on their college coursework via dual enrollment with Lurleen B. Wallace Community College or Enterprise State.

Geneva and Tallassee are not alone in their commitment to our students. Dothan's Wallace Community College offers training in 16 high-demand career fields. Wallace takes their programs to the next level by combining traditional study with hands-on experience. Their criminal justice program, for example, utilizes a virtual law enforcement training simulator, the only of its kind on an Alabama college campus.

These programs serve as a model, not only for the State of Alabama but for the Nation as a whole. Their successes demonstrate the potential career-type programs hold.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is so much more than just funding. It makes important improvements to our career tech policy, including: simplifying the application process that community and State leaders have to navigate in order to receive Federal funds; providing more flexibility to administrators so they can adjust to the needs of the students and the industry; improving accountability and transparency to

ensure that the programs that we are funding actually deliver results; and, lastly, ensuring a limited Federal role in education, just as we did in the new K-12 law.

Mr. Speaker, with the modern workplace changing at a rapid pace, it is imperative that educators and facilities keep up. With this bill, these programs can continue to successfully connect today's students with the careers of tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, we have an opportunity to take the next step in career and technical education today. The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act will help equip our students with skills, knowledge, and experience they need to start their careers.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass this legislation and support our future workforce.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PHILANDO CASTILE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember a public servant taken from us too soon; an individual who, through his life and example, inspired others, especially children, to be respectful and kind; a man who lived his life in service to others, Philando Castile.

In recent days, his name has been back in the headlines, but I want to talk about the person behind the stories. I want to talk about a man failed by our creed of liberty and justice for all. Philando Castile was the beloved nutrition services supervisor at J.J. Hill Montessori Magnet School, who was so invested in the young people he served, that he memorized the names and food allergies of more than 500 students.

One of his coworkers said: Kids loved him. He was quiet, respectful, and kind. I knew him as warm and funny.

Another said: He was as much a teacher as any teacher in that building.

His life was an example of living honorably for your community, for your family, and for the more than 500 students who loved him. Even in his final moments, he showed respect and dignity in what must have been a terrifying experience.

Mr. Castile's loss is our loss. He lived life as we all should: loving and respecting those around him. When he was told by an officer to get his ID, he complied and respectfully informed the officer that he was lawfully carrying a concealed firearm; that he had a valid permit. When he went to get his ID, as ordered, he was shot—not once, but seven times—not because of non-compliance, not because he was violent, not because he was a menacing threat. What killed him was his Blackness, or, more precisely, fear of his Blackness killed him.

Tragically, his story is not unique. This happens every day to Black men and women in America. Philando's story only made headlines because it was live-streamed on Facebook and showed a 4-year-old girl sitting behind him as seven rounds were emptied into his chest. A 4-year-old girl, that even Philando's murderer said "was in my line of fire."

Mr. Speaker, this murder was so downright outrageous that it led *The Federalist*, a publication that previously published an article on how Black Lives Matter protests were destroying America, to call the not-guilty verdict an abomination.

Indeed, this is an abomination and a complete miscarriage of justice. *The Federalist* and I see eye to eye on this one thing. Groups in the center, on the right, on the left, have publicly and vocally condemned his murder, except for one: the National Rifle Association. The NRA's silence is sickening, deafening, and very hypocritical in this tragic American hour. For decades, the NRA has used fearmongering to claim that they are the sole organization fighting to protect the rights of every American to carry a firearm.

Where were they for Philando? Where is their outrage? Where is their stand for Philando's freedoms and rights? Where is their demand for better police training when dealing with citizens authorized to carry a firearm?

Shame, they have no outrage at this verdict. Shame for their double standard in supporting people with valid concealed-carry permits. They offer nothing but a tepid Facebook statement expressing concern.

Concern? The NRA has concern for Philando? Shame on the NRA. For them, it clearly isn't about rights for all. For NRA members who don't fit the right profile, they should give serious thought to even being members of the NRA.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 41 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Kevin Kitrell Ross, Unity of Sacramento, Sacramento, California, offered the following prayer:

May we turn within and look higher to the God of our understanding and pray.

Loving Presence, we invoke from the celestial balconies the witness of the